

Irvine Ranch Agricultural Headquarters,  
Boyd Tenant House  
2000 feet southeast of the intersection of the  
southbound San Diego Freeway (Highway 405)  
and the southbound Santa Ana Freeway  
(Highway 5)

Irvine  
Orange County  
California

HABS No. CA-2275-B

HABS  
CAL.  
30-IRV,  
1-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HABS  
CAL,  
30-IRV,  
1-B-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
IRVINE RANCH AGRICULTURAL HEADQUARTERS,  
BOYD TENANT HOUSE  
HABS NO. CA-~~2265-A~~  
2275-B

**Location:** Approximately 200' southwest of the I-5/I-405 Interstate Highway at approximately .5 mile south-southeast of the confluence of these two highways in Orange County, California [see Location Map, page 10].

U.S.G.S. El Toro Quadrangle, 1968 photorev. 1982  
UTM Coordinates: 11 432120 3722020  
11 432260 3722020  
11 432260 3722100  
11 432120 3722100

**Present Owner:** The Irvine Company  
Agricultural Headquarters  
13042 SW Myford Road  
Irvine, California 92714

**Date  
of Construction:** ca. 1910

**Designer:** None

**Builder:** The Irvine Company

**Present Occupant:** None

**Present Use:** Demolished

**Significance:** The Boyd Tenant House was associated with the operation of the Irvine Ranch during the early 20th century, when James Irvine Jr. embarked on expanding agricultural production through the use of tenant farmers. Until it was demolished in mid-1989, it was one of a handful of extant tenant houses that are outliers to the Irvine Agricultural Headquarters Complex, which was determined eligible for the National Register on February 2, 1982. The Headquarters Complex is located at the intersection of Myford Road and Irvine Boulevard, and the tenant house is approximately 7.5 miles southeast of there [see Vicinity Map, page 9].

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**Date:** February 15, 1990

## I. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Construction of this modest Craftsman-inspired folk house, now demolished, most likely can be ascribed to circa 1910, when houses of this particular architectural form were common in rural areas. The dimensions of the one-story cottage were 38'x24'. It was of single-wall, board-and-batten construction resting on a post-and-pier foundation. A medium-pitched hipped roof, covered with asbestos shingles, had a slight overhang and exposed rafters. An independent shed roof covered an 11'x6' open front porch. A wood paneled front door, placed slightly off-center, was flanked by 1 light/1 light double-hung wood sash windows with plain board surrounds. Fenestration on the remaining three sides consisted of the same type of double-hung sash windows, spaced asymmetrically. A small covered stoop off the rear provided access to the kitchen [see Site Plan, page 11].

The interior of the house was divided into living and food preparation areas on one side, and bedroom and bath accommodations on the other. Access to the bedrooms and bath were directly off living and kitchen areas. The interior wall at some point were covered with oil cloth over Celotex. In subsequent years this covering was masked by numerous layers of wallpaper and paint. Flooring was linoleum over pine.

The house underwent relatively few exterior alterations. A small water heater closet was added to the rear, and the original kitchen windows were replaced with glass louvered windows. Interior changes include wiring the house for electricity and the addition of indoor plumbing, including the creation of a bathroom, all apparently done in the late 1930s [LSA 1987: Appendix A]. None of these changes has seriously comprised its integrity. The original design remained unaltered, and the original materials and workmanship were still intact until it was demolished in April 1989. In part, the structure's integrity was due to Irvine Ranch policy which did not allow tenants to remove or alter tenant residences without written consent [LSA 1983:18].

When documented in 1989, outbuildings included a garage, storage shed, water tank, and machine shed. The garage, a board-and-batten structure measuring 26'x11'6", sat approximately 24' west-southwest of the house [Photographs 9-12]. Behind the garage, off the southwest corner, was situated a garden planted with opuntia. The water tank, fabricated of welded steel, was supported by a braced wood frame resting on an octagonally shaped concrete slab foundation. This structure was located approximately 50' northwest of the house [Photograph 13]. The storage shed, a small, shed-roofed, board-and-batten structure measuring 8'6"x6', sat approximately 40' directly south of the house [Photograph 14]. It may originally have been used as a privy, although inspection of the interior did not confirm this. Around the house itself, a wood picket fence defined a house yard. Geraniums partially lined the perimeter and one corner was planted with maguey and saguaro. The machine shed was located approximately 100' east of the house. Pepper, eucalyptus, and locust trees shaded the complex.

According to former occupants, the house was constructed without utilities or indoor plumbing. Prior to 1935, water to the kitchen was supplied from a water pump, and an outhouse was used for toilet facilities. Around 1935, the house was renovated, and gas, electricity, and an indoor bathroom were installed. The house underwent no major structural alterations or additions. At one time, the tenant complex included a barn, corrals, windmill, wooden water tower, and an open garage. These structures were removed at undetermined dates.

The Boyd House was typical of housing the Irvine Company built for its tenants. Judging from its design and materials, it was among the earlier tenant houses to be erected. In 1982, LSA Associates, Inc. surveyed extant structures on the Irvine Ranch within the limits of the City of Irvine. This study found that out of a potential 273 ranch structures depicted on six U.S.G.S. topographic maps dating from 1894 to 1930, 59 major historic structures were extant at that time. Since LSA's study also found that it was not uncommon for buildings to have been moved and relocated on the ranch, the total building count of 273 may have included several structures that would have appeared at more than one location on old maps. In addition, LSA's survey indicated that most of the older ranch structures were gone by the 1930s, with many of the 59 then-extant structures representing construction that took place between 1900 and 1930, the years during which the tenant farming operations of the ranch were fully developed [LSA 1983:12-20].

A review of LSA's photographs and survey data indicates that most of the tenant houses associated with the Irvine Ranch probably were built between 1910 and World War I. All of the houses extant as of 1982 were one-story cottages, vernacular in design and construction. Most of them embodied architectural elements influenced by the Craftsman style. Gable roofs predominated, usually with an overhanging eave and exposed rafters or angle braces. Several of these cottages were built with an open front porch, usually covered with a shed or gable roof and supported by plain 4x4 porch posts. Exterior wall cladding varied: some cottages were sheathed with clapboard, some with board-and-batten, and some with asbestos panels. Windows typically were 1 light/1 light wood sash, sometimes paired. Foundation systems invariably consisted of wood posts supporting a wood balloon frame structural system and allowing a minimal crawl space.

While tenant and employee residences displayed a great many similarities -- utilitarian design, lack of ornamentation, and constructed of ordinary materials -- they also reflected enough individuality to indicate that they were built as needed by more than one builder. It is obvious that they were not built from one or two standard house plans, since the size and configuration varied from one cottage to another, although all of them were small and probably had no more than four to six rooms each. In addition, window treatment varied: on some cottages the windows were all one size; on others, sizes were mixed. Placement also varied: sometimes windows were symmetrically spaced, sometimes asymmetrically. The same was true of front porch placement: sometimes centered, sometimes off-center. In sum, the variety suggests that these cottages were constructed by carpenters who worked from traditional knowledge rather than from plan. The same was probably true of outbuildings. Generally, the tenant houses at Headquarters showed evidence of regular maintenance, whereas those in outlying areas were in various stages of deterioration.

Because tenant buildings were not constructed for long-term permanence and because they lay scattered across the countryside, their potential importance as historical resources has been recognized only recently. Many buildings have already been demolished. Since 1982, at least 20 of the 59 structures extant at the time of the survey have been razed for various development projects. Most of the structures lost were tenant houses. While there is little that is architecturally or technologically distinctive about this type of housing, the structures, as a group and in relation to other ranch buildings, reflect the economic status of ranch tenants and the socio-economic hierarchy associated with corporate farming.

## II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Boyd Tenant House was associated with the 20th century development of the Irvine Ranch, although the ranch itself had its origins during the mid-19th century when many California land-grant ranchos were broken up. By 1868, through a series of purchases and court actions, James Irvine, Llewelyn Bixby, and Thomas and Benjamin Flint were in control of approximately 110,000 acres that had previously belonged to Ranchos Santiago de Santa Ana, Lomas de Santiago, and San Joaquin. Irvine provided the financial support to stock the land with sheep, which proved to be a profitable operation for several years [LSA 1983:7]. During the late 1860s the ranch supported at least 40,000 sheep, which were divided into herds of 3,000-5,000 animals spread out over the property. Shepherds reportedly lived in 8'x10' board cabins next to the corrals where they penned sheep each night. As many as 20,000 lambs were born each spring, and wood production is said to have reached as much as 200,000 pounds annually [Cleland 1978:69-70].

During the early 1870s, winters of low rainfall forced the owners to reduce the size of the flocks, and the infamous drought of 1876-77 probably resulted in severe livestock losses. The drought coincided with Irvine's purchase of the shares held by Bixby, Flint and Company. As sole owner, Irvine continued to raise sheep for a time, but the primary emphasis shifted to cattle. By 1882, however, the vicissitudes of sheep ranching augmented by constant legal battles with squatters prompted Irvine to sell a portion of his holdings. He had the land divided into 40-acre farms, which he offered for sale on the installment plan. The development scheme met with limited success, in part because new settlers often could not meet payments and in part because railroad companies also were promoting development along their own lines. During the mid-1880s, Irvine began leasing land to tenant farmers, possibly because he had experienced difficulty in selling 40-acre parcels. He first considered allowing tenant farming in about 1871, but this type of operation did not really begin to dominate the ranch until after 1895. During the 1880s, however, limited tenant farming seems to have coincided with efforts to diversify agricultural operations inasmuch as tenants are said to have raised barley and hay on leased land. At that time, the Ranch reportedly took a one-fifth share of the crop [Cleland 1978: 77-78, 89].

When Irvine died in 1886, he left the ranch in trust for his wife and son, James Irvine Jr., and gave the trustees permission to sell the ranch at their discretion. The trustees did, in fact, put the ranch up for sale at auction, but mistakes in the bidding procedure prompted them to withdraw the offer of sale. Railroad expansion changed the economic prospects of the ranch dramatically during the late 1880s. After taking the ranch off the market, the trustees took advantage of competition between the Santa Fe Railroad and Southern Pacific and eventually deeded a right-of-way across the middle of the ranch to Santa Fe in return for permission to cross Santa Fe's tracks with roads, irrigation ditches, and other ranch improvements [Cleland 1978:92-94].

During the 1890s, the ranch operation took on the attributes for which it has been known throughout much of the 20th century. Under the guidance of James Irvine Jr., who incorporated the ranch as The Irvine Company [TIC] in 1894, the practice of leasing land and equipment to tenant farmers increased. In 1896, 1,800 acres were leased to farmers on a sharecrop basis. Crop farming also took on added importance, although both cattle and sheep ranching continued. By 1895, approximately 31,000 acres were planted with barley. Two types were grown here: Chevalier barley, which was exported to Europe for brewing, and feed barley. Production reached more than a million sacks annually, with fields generating about 8-

10 sacks per acre. Beans were the second most important crop produced on the ranch during the 1890s, with much of this crop grown on the 1,800 acres leased to tenants. Wheat, corn, and potatoes were also grown on the ranch [Cleland 1978:103; Meadows 1975:n.p.].

Company records show that in 1897, 20 tenant farmers were growing barley. In addition to corn, potatoes, wheat, and beans, some tenants began to grow peanuts. Early in the 20th century, lima and black-eyed beans were added to the list, and by 1911, lima beans had replaced barley as the principal crop. Twenty-three tenants were growing limas in that year. In about 1905-07, rhubarb, flax, alfalfa, and artichokes were added to the increasingly diversified operation. Sugar beets were planted for the first time in about 1910, and a year later company records show 12 tenants were growing this crop. During these years, the ranch itself still continued to operate cattle, sheep, and barley stations, each with its own camp and employees [LSA 1983:17-18; Cleland, 1978:104-113].

In the early 1900s, James Irvine Jr. also experimented with orchard crops. In 1906, one of the largest tenant operations began when C.E. Utt and Sherman Stevens persuaded Irvine to join them in a citrus production venture. The two men formed the San Joaquin Fruit and Investment Company, in which Irvine took a share. Stevens and Utt planted 600 acres of walnuts and apricots and 400 acres of oranges and lemons. Under the terms of the contract, they developed water resources located on the ranch. While the trees grew to maturity, the partners grew row crops such as beans, peanuts, and peppers. Within a few years, the operation started to turn a profit, which allowed the company to expand its operations. In 1921, TIC granted the San Joaquin Company a lease for a period of fifteen years, at the end of which time the latter company was to purchase the land for \$1000 an acre. During the 15-year lease period, TIC collected 25 percent of the profits [Cleland 1978:116-119].

The success of the San Joaquin Fruit and Investment Company led Irvine to drain low-lying areas of the ranch in order to expand production, and eventually citrus orchards replaced grain fields. In addition, more row crops were introduced, including tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, mustard, peas, celery and rhubarb. Beans continued, though, to be one of the principal crops, and as many as 17,000 acres were devoted to lima beans in the 1930s and 1940s. Tenant farmers grew most of these crops. They leased their houses, barns, and equipment from The Irvine Company, and the company took one-third of the crop as payment [LSA 1983:10-11,17; LSA 1987 Appendix A].

Marketing cash crops required extensive warehouse and handling facilities as well as housing to accommodate employees. The first warehouse was constructed in 1889, and a second was added in 1895. In 1910, James Irvine Jr. helped to organize the Santa Ana Cooperative Sugar Company and built a sugar beet processing facility. In about 1917-18, The Irvine Company acquired the Holly Sugar Company in Santa Ana. The growing number of employees and tenants with families also led The Irvine Company to build employee housing (hunkhouses and single-family dwellings) and to establish a school and post office near the ranch headquarters on Myford Road. The company also built a citrus shipping station at ranch headquarters [LSA 1983:10,17; Sanchez 1984:78-82; Cleland 1978:111; Meadows 1975:n.p.].

Expanding agricultural production required the development of water resources and extensive irrigation systems. In order to finance these costs, The Irvine Company sold off parts of the ranch from time to time. Between 1900 and 1910, 350 acres at Laguna and 400 acres at Newport were sold off; these became the present-day cities of Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, and Corona del Mar. The cities of Tustin and Costa Mesa also had their origins in such land sales [Hertel 1971:9-10].

The depression of the 1930s marked the end of expanding agricultural operations for The Irvine Company. In 1937, TIC adapted the leasehold system to urban development with the creation of Bayshores, a residential community. Rather than selling land, The Irvine Company leased building lots for a period of 25-75 years and changed an annual lease fee as well as a maintenance fee for the private beach that was part of the community. (Eventually the practice of leasing urban residential lots was phased out in favor of fee-simple sale.) During the early 1940s, the company sold 2,318 acres of land to the federal government for the El Toro Marine Corps Base and another 1,600 acres for a dirigible station [Hertel 1971:11-13].

After James Irvine Jr. died in 1947, his son Myford inherited the helm. Myford Irvine continued the operation established by his father, a combination of tenant farming, company farming, and cooperative marketing efforts, but he also further diversified the company by investing in housing and commercial development. The post-World War II housing boom provided the impetus for this direction, which continues to the present. The Irvine Company is now primarily engaged in urban development, and its agricultural facilities and remaining farmland are leased to commercial growers [LSA 1983:11-12].

The Irvine Ranch and its successor, The Irvine Company, was and remains a major influence in the development of Orange County. In this regard, the company shares a place in California history with other large ranch and land companies, notably the Tejon Ranch, the Kern County Land Company, and Miller and Lux, all of which have helped to determine the nature and timing of growth and development in various areas of central and southern California since the late 19th century. While in general their influences have been similar, each of these land companies has operated in its own fashion, and each has left its own mark on the landscape. The Irvine Ranch is distinctive for its tradition of leasing agricultural land to tenants, yet comparatively little of the history of ranch tenant operations has been documented. Several pertinent research topics remain unexplored, including how acreage was assigned to tenants as well as who determined what crops would be grown and in what quantities. Likewise, there is no biographical profile of Irvine Ranch tenant farmers.

The historical context for evaluating the relative significance of individual structures in outlying areas has never been completely developed. Only two buildings associated with the ranch headquarters have been placed on the National Register: the Irvine Bean and Growers Association Building and Irvine Blacksmith Shop, both located at East Irvine. The most complete study of Irvine Ranch was conducted in 1982, when LSA surveyed the historic ranch structures lying within the corporate boundaries of the City of Irvine [LSA, 1983].

The Boyd House was associated with the tenant farming period, which began in about 1895 and reached its peak in about 1930. Information about the earliest tenants of the house has not been uncovered, and the historic name is taken from the tenants who are believed to have occupied the house the longest, Harry and Zola Boyd. According to information compiled in 1985 by local historian Judy Liebeck, the Boyds moved into the house in 1935 and lived there until Harry's death in 1964. Shortly after moving into the house, Boyd wired it for electricity and piped in gas for heating and cooking. The Boyds also remodeled the house to create a bathroom. Prior to moving into this house, the Boyds had leased Irvine Ranch land in Laguna Hills, but the land there reportedly was marginal as cropland, and the tenants incurred a substantial debt. When the Boyds moved to this place, James Irvine Jr. is said to have forgiven the debt on the previous lease and then turned the Laguna Hills land back into cattle range. At the new place, the Boyds farmed about 650 acres. Most of the acreage was planted with lima beans, though some of it was used for barley, garbanzo beans, and black-eyed beans. As was

standard practice, the Irvine Company took one-third of the crop in payment. The Boyds hired several illegal aliens as farmworkers, whom they fed and allowed to sleep in the yard. Boyd was a member of the Irvine Bean and Grain Grower's Association, and he delivered his crop to the Irvine warehouse first by mule team and wagon, later by truck [LSA 1987:Appendix A].

Prior to the Boyd's tenancy, the house was occupied by Percy and Kathleen Ahern Clark. Clark was a hired hand who worked for another leaseholder identified only as Mr. Lofgren. The Clarks lived in the house from 1931 to 1935. During that time, Lofgren had the land planted with barley and beans. When interviewed in 1985, Mrs. Clark recalled that other structures on the tenant farm included a large barn, corrals, a wooden water tower, a windmill, an open garage, and an outdoor privy. Water was supplied by a pump into the kitchen sink and had to be heated on the stove [LSA 1987:Appendix A].

The Boyds probably represented the last of the traditional leaseholders to live on the farm. After Harry died in 1964, his wife moved to Costa Mesa and turned the farming operation over to their only son, Bobby. Bobby Boyd held the lease for only a short time, approximately two years. The succeeding leaseholder was Leo Baudino, who hired someone else to manage the lease; the lease manager lived in the house. The length of Baudino's lease is undetermined [LSA 1987:Appendix A]. Murai Farms, the current leaseholder, last used the farm complex as a base for tending strawberry fields.

### III. Sources

Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Irvine Ranch*. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1978.

Hertel, Michael M. *Irvine Community Associations*. A Research Report of the Claremont Urban Research Center. Claremont: Claremont Graduate School, 1971.

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Meadows, Don. *Irvine--A City on Rancho San Joaquin*. Privately printed by the First National Bank of Orange County, 1975.

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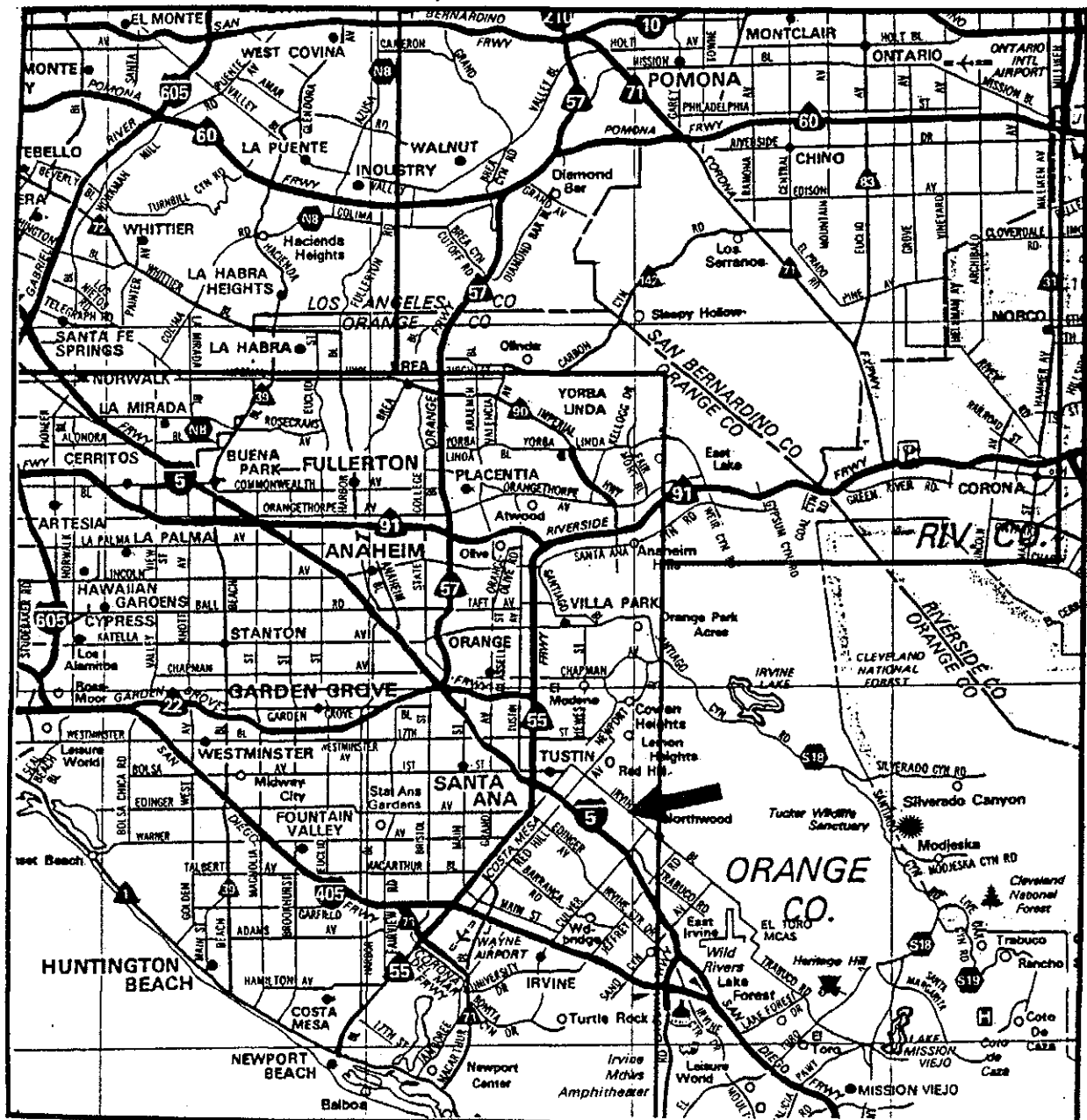
### IV. Project Information

This report was prepared as partial compliance with mitigation measures set forth in the EIR for Planning Area 34 of the City of Irvine. At the request of the Historical, Archaeological, and Paleontological Committee of the City of Irvine, mitigation measures stipulated that photographs, measured drawings, and archival research were to be completed prior to demolition of historic Irvine Ranch structures. Elizabeth Padon of LSA Associates, Inc.

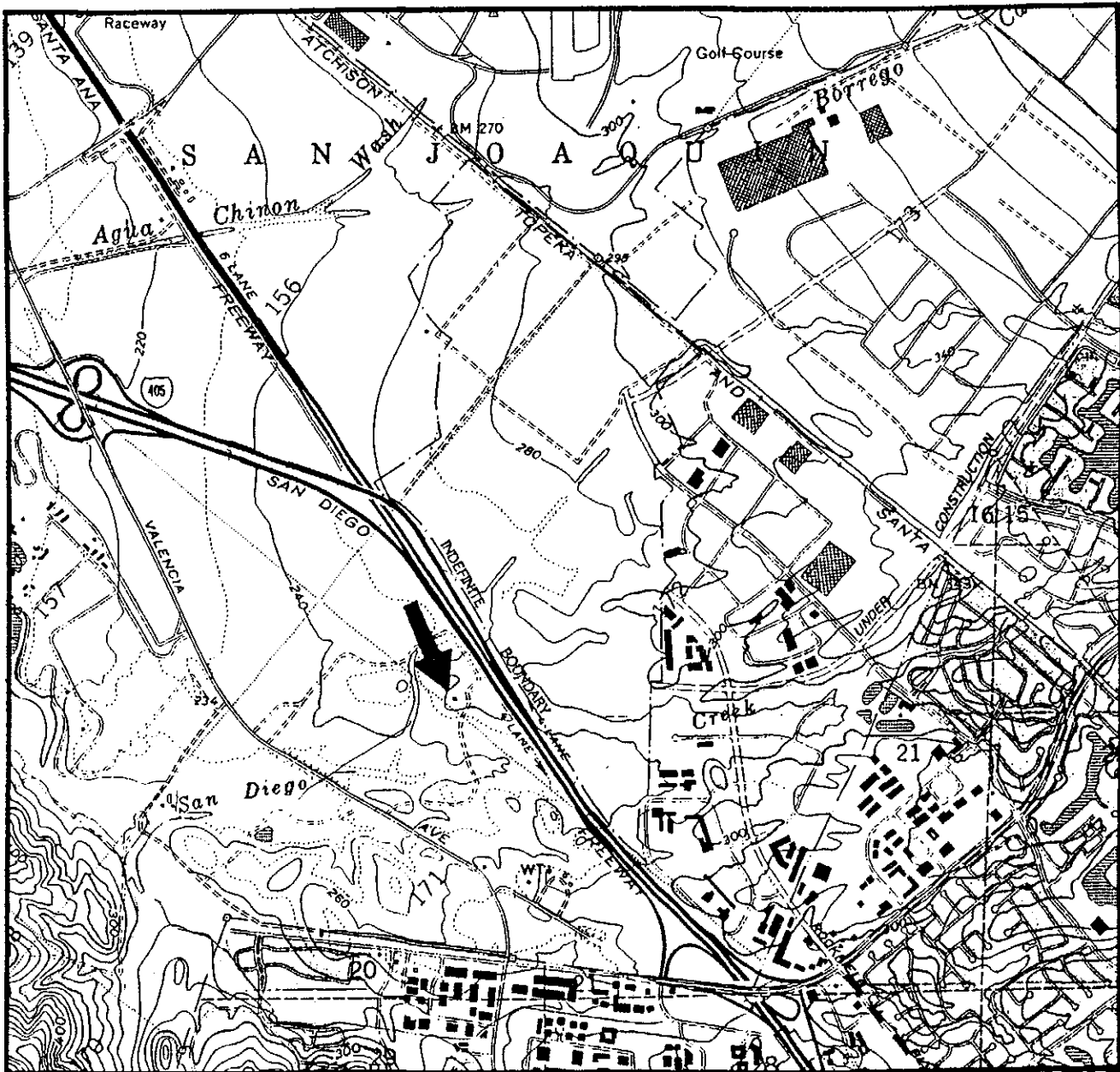


served as the Project Manager. The report was prepared under the direction of Rebecca Conard of PHR Associates, who acted as the Principal Investigator. John Elliott (LSA), Kevin A. Palmer (PHR), Pamela Post (PHR), and Ellen Keegan (PHR) provided research assistance and clerical support. Everett Weinreb of Santa Barbara was the photographer. The historical information included here is based on available published sources, limited oral history investigations, and a brief foray into company records conducted by LSA Associates in 1982. A reconnaissance of currently held company records conducted by The Irvine Company in 1989-90 indicated no holdings that would be useful for establishing construction dates, names of leaseholders, leasehold acreage, and crop production over time. Local historian Jim Sleeper, who has indexed some Irvine Ranch records, was also contacted; a check of his files likewise failed to locate any information regarding the tenants.

Vicinity Map  
Irvine Ranch Agricultural Headquarters  
Source: 1989 Thomas Bros. California Road Atlas



Source: U.S.G.S. El Toro Quadrangle, 1968 photorev. 1982



Site Plan, Boyd Tenant House and Outbuildings

